

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8286

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 1525

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR ZA OVIP (KAUNDA, KENNETH)

SUBJ: PRESIDENT KAUNDA

REF: LUSAKA 1395, LUSAKA 1340, 76 LUSAKA 1027

1. IN A CERTAIN SENSE KENNETH KAUNDA IS A TRAGIC FIGURE. HE IS IN EVERY WAY AN ADMIRABLE MAN FACING PROBLEMS OFTEN BEYOND HIS CONTROL OR ABILITY TO DEAL WITH. AN HONEST AND SINCERE MAN OF HIGH PRINCIPLE AND THE BEST OF INTENTIONS; A RELIGIOUS AND HARD WORKING MAN, AND A MAN RESPECTED IN HIS OWN SOCIETY, KAUNDA IS STILL A SIMPLE PERSON WHO IS ILL PREPARED EITHER BY EDUCATION, TRAINING OR INTELLECT TO DEAL WITH THE COMPLEX ISSUES FACING HIS NATION. AS A RESULT HE IS INCLINED TO RESORT TO HIS CONSIDERABLE ORATORICAL TALENTS, EMOTIONAL OUTBREAKS, AND PERSONALIZATION OF ISSUES TO GRAPPLE WITH THE NATION'S PROBLEMS. IF THINGS AREN'T GOING WELL HE BLAMES ONE OR ANOTHER OF HIS FOLLOWERS OR FOREIGN CONSPIRACIES. HE IS INCLINED TO EXHORT RATHER THAN ANALYZE AN ISSUE AND DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO DEAL WITH IT. ("ZAMBIA WILL FALL WITHOUT LOVE AND WORK" HE SAYS.) HE DOES NOT PARTICULARLY ENJOY INTELLECTUAL GIVE AND TAKE, PREFERRING TO DECIDE HIS POSITION AHEAD OF TIME AND DECLAIM IT AT LENGTH AND WITH SOME EMOTION.

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HE IS NOT A GOOD LISTENER, AND IS RARELY WILLING TO CHANGE HIS POSITION DURING A CONVERSATION. AS A RESULT, HE RESORTS TO FILLING HIS LIFE WITH PROTOCOLARY DUTIES AND SUPERFICIAL CONTACTS. HE ENJOYS TELLING AND HEARING A GOOD STORY, AND LAUGHS READILY. HE PREFERS TO BEGIN A CONVERSATION WITH SOME LIGHT TALK, AND HAVE A GOOD LAUGH BEFORE GETTING DOWN TO SERIOUS SUBJECTS.

2. FROM THE BEGINNING OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S ADMINISTRATION, KAUNDA HAS MADE CLEAR HIS SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FOR THE NEW U.S. POLICIES AND THE PRESIDENT. HE REGULARLY GOES OUT OF HIS WAY TO EXPRESS PUBLICLY HIS CONFIDENCE IN PRESIDENT CARTER AND CLOSE IDENTITY WITH HIS POLICIES. THE CLOSEST HE COMES TO CRITICISM IS TO SAY THAT HE DOUBTS WHETHER THE AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENT WILL LONG PUT UP WITH JIMMY CARTER AND ANDY YOUNG. IT IS THE PRESIDENT'S RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND AND EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH SO APPEAL TO KAUNDA. THE ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT BELIEVES IN THE PRESIDENT'S SINCERITY AND HONESTY AND PUTS GREAT FAITH IN HIS ABILITY TO PRODUCE A SETTLEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

3. DURING THE FIRST YEARS OF ZAMBIAN INDEPENDENCE AND SMITH'S RISE IN RHODESIA, KAUNDA WAS CONSIDERED A MODERATE AND A MAN WILLING TO COMPROMISE IN SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION TO THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM. HE HAS HOWEVER BECOME DISILLUSIONED AFTER TWELVE YEARS OF BRITISH AND WESTERN PROMISES THAT THEY WOULD DEAL WITH SMITH. HE HAS BECOME CONVINCED THAT THE ONLY THING WHICH WILL GET RID OF SMITH IS THE MILITARY EFFORTS OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, BACKED BY THE FRONTLINE AS ITS "LOYAL REAR GUARD" AND SUPPLIED FROM COMMUNIST SOURCES. HE WAS ONCE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH SMITH AND VORSTER TO

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TRY TO FIND A COMPROMISE SOLUTION, BUT HE IS LESS AND LESS WILLING TO DO SO NOW. JOSHUA NKOMO, SIX YEARS HIS ELDER, WAS A LEADER IN THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT EVEN BEFORE KAUNDA. THEY WERE HELD IN JAIL TOGETHER AND KAUNDA AND MANY AROUND HIM NOT ONLY REVERE NKOMO AS A LEADER BUT FEEL A CERTAIN GUILT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN ENJOYING THE FRUITS OF POWER FOR TWELVE-FIFTEEN YEARS WHILE NKOMO IS STILL WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS SEARCHING FOR HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE. THERE IS A LIMIT TO HOW FAR THEY WILL GO IN SUPPORTING NKOMO, BUT CERTAINLY THEY ALL BELIEVE HE DESERVES THE PRESIDENCY OF ZIMBABWE, AND THAT HE IS BY FAR THE MOST ABLE OF THE NATIONALISTS. THEY WILL GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO SUPPORT HIM.

4. KAUNDA ROSE TO POWER IN ZAMBIA AS A RESULT OF HIS PERSONAL QUALITIES OF INTEGRITY AND LEADERSHIP, BOLSTERED BY HIS NONTRIBAL BACKGROUND. HIS PARENTS CAME FROM MALAWI AND HE GREW UP AMONG THE NORTHERN BEMBA TRIBESMEN. HE IS THE ONLY ZAMBIAN LEADER WHO IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE REGIONALLY BIASED AND HE HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE ABILITY IN PLAYING THE FOUR REGIONAL GROUPS OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER.

ALL OTHER LEADERS IN THE COUNTRY ARE REGIONALLY BASED AND LACK NATIONAL FOLLOWING. A GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT IN KAUNDA'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE COMPLEX POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING ZAMBIA IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY WIDESPREAD (LUSAKA 1395). KAUNDA APPEARS TO BE FIRMLY ATTACHED TO THE IDEA OF ELECTIONS IN 1978. AS HIS PROBLEMS MOUNT, THE ELECTIONS APPEAL TO HIM AS A JUSTIFICATION OF HIS PERSONAL AND POLITICAL STYLE, A STYLE WHICH PERMITS BROAD PARTICIPATION IN POLICY MAKING, PERMISSIVENESS TOWARDS CRITICISM AND FORGIVENESS OF OPPONENTS. HOWEVER HIS DEDICATION TO ELECTIONS MAY RESULT IN THE DEMISE OF MANY OF THOSE NOW AROUND HIM, AND THUS IS NOT WIDELY SUPPORTED.

5. AS KAUNDA PUTS GREATER FAITH IN THE U.S. ABILITY TO HELP
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FIND A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, HE INCREASINGLY ALLOWS HIMSELF TO VENT HIS FRUSTRATION AND ANGER

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8287

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 1525

AT THE BRITISH INABILITY TO DO SO. THUS HE HAS TAKEN A GROWING ANTI-BRITISH ATTITUDE OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS(ALTHOUGH HE HAS INVITED THE QUEEN AND COMMONWEALTH CHIEFS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING TO ZAMBIA NEXT YEAR). ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA HAS DIMINISHED HIS INTEREST IN BROADER THIRD WORLD ISSUES AND HIS DESIRE TO PLAY A LEADERSHIP ROLE AMONG THE NONALIGNED. EVEN WITHIN THE FRONTLINE HIS INCREASINGLY EMOTIONAL AND DOGMATIC POSITIONS HAVE ESTRANGED HIM SOMEWHAT

FROM NYERERE, MACHEL AND KHAMA. ONE NO LONGER GETS THE SAME IMPRESSION OF CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WHICH EXISTED A YEAR AGO. THERE IS A DESPERATION TO KAUNDA'S VIEW OF THE RHODESIAN SITUATION IN PARTICULAR WHICH COLORS VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING ELSE HE DOES.

6. DESPITE HIS MANY PROBLEMS, KAUNDA REMAINS THE PREEMINENT ZAMBIAN POLITICAL FIGURE, WITH NO RIVAL CLEARLY ON THE HORIZON, AND A TOUCH STONE IN A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. LOW

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